

DESCRIPTION

INFORMATION RECORDING/REPRODUCTION APPARATUS AND RECORDING
SYSTEM THEREOF

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TECHNICAL FIELD

The present invention relates to an information recording/reproduction apparatus and a recording system thereof. More specifically, the present invention relates to a setting
10 method for a preprogrammed recording of information.

BACKGROUND ART

Operations for performing a preprogrammed recording of information with a conventional information
15 recording/reproduction apparatus and a recording system thereof will be briefly described, taking preprogrammed videorecording of a program by a videorecording/reproduction apparatus such as a television set as an example. At the time of preprogrammed videorecording, a user operates the videorecording/reproduction
20 apparatus and evokes a new program videorecording preprogramming inputting screen. Then, the user inputs necessary conditions for preprogrammed videorecording, as prompted on the evoked new program videorecording preprogramming inputting screen. Thereafter, the user further operates the videorecording/reproduction apparatus
25 to evoke a program videorecording preprogramming confirmation

screen to check whether the content of videorecording preprogramming which has been performed at the new program videorecording preprogramming inputting screen is correct or not.

Usually, programs which are preprogrammed for
5 videorecording are sorted according to the videorecording preprogramming starting time of the program and displayed in a list table format written in text. Other than the list table format, a preprogramming table format in text is also proposed in Japanese Laid-Open Patent Publication No. 06-118185. Further,
10 in addition to a preprogramming table format, a technique of displaying an operational displaying area as an overlapping text in conjunction with redundant preprogrammings or in short time slots is proposed in Japanese Laid-Open Patent Publication No. 2000-278639.

15 The videorecording preprogramming operation using a new program videorecording preprogramming screen and a program videorecording preprogramming listing screen can also be realized by inputting necessary items to a remote control with LCD or the like and transferring the inputted items to the
20 videorecording/reproduction apparatus without manipulating the videorecording/reproduction apparatus itself.

DISCLOSURE OF THE INVENTION

However, following problems exist with the program
25 videorecording preprogramming confirmation screen used in an

information recording/reproduction apparatus such as the above-described videorecording/reproduction apparatus.

In the case of displaying programs which have been preprogrammed for videorecording in a list table format, it is
5 difficult to find identical programs which are redundantly preprogrammed for videorecording, so-called redundant program videorecording preprogrammings, at a glance. Furthermore, since the user confirms the preprogramming state by following the displayed text, it is easy to overlook the preprogrammings. For
10 this reason, there is a high possibility of failing in important program videorecording preprogramming, due to redundant settings, erroneous settings, and forgetting to perform settings.

Further, the preprogramming table format disclosed in Japanese Laid-Open Patent Publication No. 06-118185 amounts to
15 a mere preprogramming table version of a list table. Therefore, it is not possible to cope with program videorecording preprogrammings on a videorecording/reproduction apparatus comprising a plurality of independent videorecording devices which are interconnected directly or via a network.

20 Moreover, in the case of a preprogramming table format proposed in the aforementioned Japanese Laid-Open Patent Publication No. 2000-278639, it is also not possible to cope with a program videorecording preprogramming on a videorecording/reproduction apparatus comprising a plurality of
25 independent videorecording devices. Specifically, even though

operational displaying areas may be displayed in an overlapping manner in conjunction with redundant preprogrammings or in short time slots, such that they may be sequentially selected and displayed at the forefront for manipulation, all of them may not
5 be displayable on the display screen if a large number of redundant preprogrammings and the like coincide. Therefore, in order to utilize the preprogramming table for confirming videorecording preprogramming, displayed items and information, or displaying methods must be limited somehow. Although the existence of the
10 plurality of independent videorecording devices or videorecording devices connected via a network is shown on the display screen, no consideration is given to any method for performing videorecordings across such devices.

The above example illustrates preprogrammed videorecording
15 of a program by a videorecording/reproduction apparatus such as a television set. However, the aforementioned issues are common problems to any information recording/reproduction apparatus on which one can basically set a preprogramming before the time of distribution to record information which is distributed at a
20 predetermined time. It is needless to say that the same is also true of an information recording apparatus which does not have a reproduction function.

Thus, in view of the aforementioned problems regarding conventional videorecording/reproduction apparatuses, an object
25 of the present invention is to provide an information

recording/reproduction apparatus and a recording method therefor
which facilitate grasping program videorecording preprogrammings
at a glance, prevent failure in performing important program
videorecording preprogrammings due to redundant settings,
5 erroneous settings, and forgetting to perform settings, and, if
redundant preprogrammings take place, draw the user's attention
through providing an easily recognizable display mode. Another
object of the present invention is to provide an information
recording/reproduction apparatus and information recording
10 system which reduces complication and errors in settings of program
videorecording preprogramming performed on a videorecording
device comprising a plurality of independent recording devices,
an independent recording device having a plurality of recording
media, or a recording device connected to a network, and realize
15 optimum program videorecording preprogramming settings as
automatically as possible.

An information recording/reproduction apparatus for
performing a preprogrammed recording of information distributed
at a predetermined time from a predetermined distribution source
20 to predetermined information recording means, based on
preprogrammed recording settings determined before the time of
distribution, the information recording/reproduction apparatus
comprises:

recording/reproduction means for recording and reproducing
25 the information;

preprogrammed recording specifying means for specifying, as the preprogrammed recording settings, a date of distribution, the time of distribution, the distribution source of the information, and information recording means;

5 preprogrammed recording setting displaying means for displaying the preprogrammed recording setting on a two dimensional matrix defined by the date of distribution and the information recording means, and the time of distribution;

preprogrammed recording setting specifying means for
10 specifying each preprogrammed recording setting displayed on the two dimensional matrix;

preprogrammed recording setting displaying means for displaying the specified preprogrammed recording setting; and

preprogrammed recording setting editing means for editing
15 the displayed preprogrammed recording setting.

As described above, according to the present invention, when redundant preprogrammings take place, it is easily recognizable since preprogrammed recording settings are displayed so as to be spread out on a two dimensional matrix.

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BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

FIG. 1 is a block diagram illustrating the constitution of an information recording/reproduction apparatus according to a first embodiment of the present invention.

25 FIG. 2 is a diagram illustrating an example of a

videorecording preprogramming setting screen on the information recording/reproduction apparatus shown in FIG. 1.

FIG. 3 is a diagram illustrating a pop-up menu being displayed when a preprogrammed portion on the videorecording preprogramming setting screen shown in FIG. 2 is designated.

FIG. 4 is an enlarged view of the pop-up menu illustrated in FIG. 3.

FIG. 5 is a flowchart illustrating a videorecording preprogramming operation of the information recording/reproduction apparatus shown in FIG. 1.

FIG. 6 is a flowchart illustrating a videorecording preprogramming operation on the information recording/reproduction apparatus shown in FIG. 1, in the case of not detecting a remaining capacity of a storage medium.

FIG. 7 is a diagram illustrating exemplary elements included in a new recording setting information inputting unit shown in FIG. 1.

FIG. 8 is a flowchart illustrating a videorecording preprogramming changing process operation on the information recording/reproduction apparatus shown in FIG. 1.

FIG. 9 is a diagram illustrating exemplary elements included in a recording setting information recording unit of the information recording/reproduction apparatus shown in FIG. 1.

FIG. 10 is a block diagram illustrating the constitution of an information recording/reproduction apparatus according to

a second embodiment of the present invention.

FIG. 11 is a diagram illustrating an exemplary videorecording preprogramming setting screen of the information recording/reproduction apparatus shown in FIG. 10.

5 FIG. 12 is a diagram illustrating a pop-up menu being displayed when a preprogrammed portion on the videorecording preprogramming setting screen shown in FIG. 10 is designated.

FIG. 13 is an enlarged view of the pop-up menu shown in FIG. 12.

10 FIG. 14 is a block diagram illustrating necessary constituent elements for the information recording/reproduction apparatus shown in FIG. 10 to function as a slave device.

FIG. 15 is a flowchart illustrating a videorecording preprogramming operation of the information
15 recording/reproduction apparatus shown in FIG. 10.

FIG. 16 is a flowchart illustrating a videorecording preprogramming operation when the information recording/reproduction apparatus shown in FIG. 10 functions as a master device.

20 FIG. 17 is a flowchart illustrating a videorecording preprogramming operation of the information recording/reproduction apparatus shown in FIG. 14.

FIG. 18 is a schematic diagram showing the constitution of information recording/reproduction apparatus shown in FIG. 10.

25 FIG. 19 is a diagram illustrating an example of order of

priority in selecting recording devices in the information recording/reproduction apparatus shown in FIG. 10.

BEST MODE FOR CARRYING OUT THE INVENTION

5 (first embodiment)

Hereinafter, with reference to FIGS. 1 to 9, an information recording/reproduction apparatus according to a first embodiment will be described below. The information recording/reproduction apparatus according to the present embodiment comprises one
10 recording device and is used independently, i.e., without being connected to any other information recording/reproduction apparatus or the like. An example of such an apparatus may be a television set with a recording function which is not connected to other videorecording apparatuses via a network or via wiring.
15 For the present embodiment, a television set which only one DVD recorder that employs, as means for information recording/reproduction, a DVD-RAM as a recording medium is connected to or incorporated in will be described in detail as a specific example.

20 In FIG. 1, the constitution of the information recording/reproduction apparatus according to an embodiment of the present invention is illustrated. An information recording/reproduction apparatus Arp1 comprises a new recording setting information inputting unit 100, a recording setting
25 information storing unit 101a, a displaying unit 102, an

information recording control unit 103a, a recording/reproduction unit 104, a redundant setting detection unit 1000a, a remaining capacity detection unit 1001a, a recording setting information displaying unit 1002, a tuner 1003, an AV data control unit 1004,
5 and a NW device AV receiving unit 1005.

The new recording setting information inputting unit 100 comprises inputting devices such as a remote control or a keyboard, and it receives a videorecording preprogramming instruction made to the information recording/reproduction apparatus Arp1, based
10 on a user's manipulation. The new recording setting information inputting unit 100 generates preprogramming data Ir in response to the received videorecording preprogramming instruction.

The redundant setting detection unit 1000a has a function of detecting an occurrence of redundant preprogramming in the
15 information recording/reproduction apparatus Arp1. Specifically, in response to the preprogramming data Ir outputted from the new recording setting information inputting unit 100, it outputs a preprogramming state data requesting command Crs which requests the record setting information storing unit 101a for
20 preprogramming state data Irr.

The recording setting information storing unit 101a is a database recording videorecording preprogramming information which is registered in the information recording/reproduction apparatus Arp1. The recording setting information storing unit
25 101a outputs registered videorecording preprogramming

information Irr for a corresponding time slot to the redundant setting detection unit 1000a, in response to the preprogramming state data requesting command Crs outputted from the redundant setting detection unit 1000a.

5 The redundant setting detection unit 1000a determines the presence or absence of a redundant preprogramming occurrence, by comparing the preprogramming data Ir against the registered videorecording preprogramming information Irr. If it is determined that no redundant preprogramming occurs, the redundant
10 setting detection unit 1000a outputs the preprogramming data Ir to the recording setting information storing unit 101a. On the other hand, if it is determined that a redundant preprogramming occurs, the redundant setting detection unit 1000a generates redundant preprogramming detection information Ird and outputs
15 it to the information recording control unit 103a.

 The recording setting information storing unit 101a updates its videorecording preprogramming information database, based on the preprogramming data Ir outputted from the redundant setting detection unit 1000a. The recording setting information storing
20 unit 101a sequentially outputs videorecording preprogramming information, which is registered in the videorecording preprogramming information database, to the information recording control unit 103a.

 The tuner 1003 receives information (e.g., a broadcasting
25 program) supplied from an external information source such as a

broadcasting station, and generates AV data Dav1. The AV data Dav1 is outputted to the AV data control unit 1004.

The NW device AV receiving unit 1005 is connected to an information source such as an external AV device or a recording apparatus via a network and the like. The NW device AV receiving unit 1005 outputs AV data Dav2, which is supplied from an external information source, to the AV data control unit 1004.

AV data control unit 1004 obtains an AV data attribute (e.g., a bit rate) of AV data Dav1 and AV data Dav2 which are inputted from the tuner 1003 and the NW device AV receiving unit 1005, and generates AV data attribute information. The AV data control unit 1004 causes the recording/reproduction unit 104 to record the AV data Dav1 and AV data Dav2 at appropriate times, based on an AV control signal Cav outputted from the information recording control unit 103a. Hereinafter, the AV data Dav1 and AV data Dav2 will be collectively referred to as AV data Dav, unless otherwise specified.

Further, the AV data control unit 1004 reads out the AV data Dav recorded in the recording/reproduction unit 104, based on AV data DAV. The AV data Dav having been read is supplied to an external AV device, a recording apparatus, or the like, via the NW device AV receiving unit 1005.

The remaining capacity detection unit 1001a detects an unrecorded portion of the recording capacity, i.e., an amount of data which is still recordable, of an information recording medium

(a DVD-RAM, in the present embodiment) comprised in the recording/reproduction unit 104, and generates and stores remaining capacity information Irv. The generation of the remaining capacity information Irv is performed as follows. First,
5 the remaining capacity detection unit 1001 outputs the remaining capacity command CRv to the information recording control unit 103a, and the information recording control unit 103a queries the AV data control unit 1004 about the recordable capacity of the recording/reproduction unit 104. Then, as remaining capacity
10 information Irv, the AV data control unit 1004 notifies the information recording control unit 103a of the recordable capacity of the recording/reproduction unit 104 which is managed in the course of recording and reading out of the AV data Dav being made to the recording/reproduction unit 104.

15 Then, in response to the remaining capacity command CRv from the information recording control unit 103a, the remaining capacity detection unit 1001a outputs the remaining capacity information Irv, which has been notified by the AV data control unit 1004, to the information recording control unit 103a.

20 The recording setting information displaying unit 1002 generates preprogramming information image data Irs indicating videorecording preprogramming information of the present time, based on the registered videorecording preprogramming information Irr which is inputted from the recording setting
25 information storing unit 101a via the information recording

control unit 103a. The displaying unit 102 displays a
videorecording preprogramming setting screen 1a exemplified in
FIG. 2 to the user, based on the preprogramming information image
data Irs. Further, when the redundant preprogramming occurrence
5 is detected by the above-described redundant setting detection
unit 1000a, the recording setting information displaying unit
1002 indicates to the user the occurrence of a redundant
preprogramming on the displaying unit 102, based on the redundant
preprogramming detection information Ird inputted via the
10 recording control unit 103a.

As the information recording/reproduction apparatus Arp1
and a videorecording device, devices capable of videorecording
such as a DVD recorder, a Blu-ray disk recorder, a hard disk
recorder, a videotape recorder, and a personal computer may be
15 used. For a videorecording medium, any recording medium may
be used, e.g., optical disks such as a DVD-RAM, a DVD-R, a DVD-RW,
a DVD+R, a DVD+RW, a Blu-ray Disc, a Video-CD; a hard disk; any
type of memory card such as a SD card; and videotapes such as
D-VHS, S-VHS and DV may be used.

20 In FIG. 2, a videorecording preprogramming setting screen
1a to be displayed on the display screen of the displaying unit
102 such as a television set is schematically shown. The
videorecording preprogramming setting screen 1a is generally
divided into: a videorecording preprogramming state table Tra
25 displaying an image representing a videorecording preprogramming

state (registered videorecording preprogramming information Irr) based on the preprogramming data Ir, which is videorecording preprogramming information inputted by the user; a videorecording preprogramming setting section Asa for the user to use for a
5 videorecording preprogramming setting by inputting preprogramming information thereto; and a register button 19.

The videorecording preprogramming state table Tra comprises a date displaying section 3 (denoted as "date" in the figure), a time displaying section 6, a videorecording preprogramming
10 operating area 7a, a videorecording preprogramming setting indication 8, a horizontal scroll bar 9, and a vertical scroll bar 10. In the date displaying section 3, a target date for which a videorecording preprogramming is set is displayed. In the present example, both dates of the 5th (Monday) and the 6th (Tuesday)
15 are displayed as videorecording preprogramming targets.

In the time displaying section 6, videorecording preprogramming targeted time is displayed. In the present example, the time from 7:00 to 15:00 (explicitly, till 14:00) is the target for preprogramming.

20 In the videorecording preprogramming operating area 7a, various videorecording pattern as defined by the aforementioned date and recording time are graphically displayed. In the example herein, the videorecording preprogramming operating area 7a is further divided into six areas (vertical rows) by five vertical
25 lines. This indicates that although the information

recording/reproduction apparatus Arp1 physically comprises only one recording apparatus which is the recording/reproduction unit 104, the recording/reproduction unit 104 is to be virtually treated as a plurality of storing apparatuses.

5 In one method, the above can be realized by dividing the recording area of the physical recording medium in the recording /reproduction unit 104 into a plurality of partitions and performing recording to each partition by a multi-task process. Each vertical row corresponds to a virtual storing device.
10 Specifically, the present example illustrates a case where a maximum of six simultaneous videorecordings can be performed in the single recording/reproduction unit 104.

 However, the actual number of videorecordings which can be simultaneously performed depends on the relationship between the
15 processing ability of the information recording/reproduction apparatus Arp1 and the processing load required for the videorecording. Therefore, in the information recording/reproduction apparatus videorecording preprogramming setting screen 1a, the number of videorecording preprogrammings
20 which can be accepted and the actual number of videorecording preprogrammings which can be performed are different. This will be described later in detail with reference to the flowchart of FIG. 5.

 In FIG. 2, an actually videorecording-preprogrammed
25 portion (shown hatched) may be displayed in a different color from

the color of any other portion of the videorecording preprogramming operating area 7a, for example, for the purpose of differentiation. This videorecording-preprogrammed portion is called the videorecording preprogramming setting indication 8. The user can intuitively grasp the content of videorecording preprogrammings, according to the pattern of the videorecording preprogramming setting indication 8 which is graphically displayed on the videorecording preprogramming operating area 7a.

A videorecording preprogramming setting indication designating pointer 20a is used for designating a specific portion on the videorecording preprogramming operating area 7a, as a result of which the setting contents corresponding to the designated portion is displayed in the videorecording preprogramming setting section Asa. In the present example, a videorecording preprogramming is set for 8:30 to 11:00 of the 5th (Monday) on a recording medium DVD-RAM of a videorecording device DVD recorder. In the videorecording preprogramming setting section Asa, not only such setting information but also further detailed information is shown, which will be described later in detail with reference to FIG. 3 and FIG. 4.

The user can display a date portion which cannot be displayed within the limited displaying area of the videorecording preprogramming state table Tra by operating the horizontal scroll bar 9. Likewise, the user can display a time portion which cannot be displayed in the videorecording preprogramming state table Tra

by operating the vertical scroll bar 10. Specifically, the videorecording preprogramming state of days before or after the 5th (Monday) and the 6th (Tuesday) or at a time before or after 7:00 to 15:00 can be displayed.

5 The videorecording preprogramming setting section Asa, in which a user inputs various information for the purpose of setting a videorecording preprogramming and which presents the setting information to the user, comprises a videorecording date setting area 12, a broadcasting channel setting area 13, a videorecording
10 start time setting area 14, a videorecording end time setting area 15, and a videorecording mode setting area 16. In the present example, as mentioned above, the inputted information in the videorecording preprogramming setting indication 8 which has been designated by the videorecording preprogramming setting
15 indication designating pointer 20a is being presented.

 To the videorecording date setting area 12, a date on which to perform the videorecording that is videorecording-preprogrammed is inputted. In the present example, it is illustrated that a videorecording is set to be started on
20 August 5th of the year 2002.

 To the broadcasting channel setting area 13, a channel on which a videorecording-preprogrammed program is to be broadcasted is inputted. In the present example, it is illustrated that channel 2 is set.

25 To the videorecording start time setting area 14, a start

time of videorecording for a videorecording-preprogrammed program is inputted. In the present example, it is illustrated that 8:30 is set.

To the videorecording end time setting area 15, a time at which to end the videorecording of a videorecording-preprogrammed program is inputted. In the present example, 11:00 is set.

To the videorecording mode setting area 16, a type of videorecording mode, i.e., long play or standard play, is inputted. In the present example, standard play is shortened and displayed as SP in the display.

The user performs a videorecording preprogramming by correctly setting each area of the videorecording preprogramming setting section Asa, and after the user confirms the setting state, the videorecording preprogramming is completed by pressing the register button 19 so as to finalize registration of the setting contents. As a result, the finally-registered videorecording preprogramming is reflected to the videorecording preprogramming operating area 7a of the videorecording preprogramming state table Tra and displayed as the videorecording preprogramming setting indication 8. The user can again change the setting information, by designating one of the videorecording preprogramming setting indications 8 to which the videorecording preprogramming has been reflected with the videorecording preprogramming setting indication designating pointer 20a so as to allow detailed videorecording preprogramming setting information to be displayed

in the videorecording preprogramming setting section Asa.

The aforementioned videorecording preprogramming setting screen 1a may be arranged so that a calendar is displayed at an appropriate position therein. In this case, by selecting a displayed date on the calendar, a desired date can be selectively inputted, in order to input or change the distribution date of a preprogrammed recording setting (videorecording date setting area 12), using the videorecording preprogramming state table Tra or the videorecording preprogramming setting section Asa.

With reference to FIG. 3, videorecording preprogramming setting on the information recording/reproduction apparatus Arpl will be described specifically. As described with reference to FIG. 2, a videorecording preprogramming setting is performed by designating a desired videorecording preprogramming portion of the videorecording preprogramming state table Tra in the videorecording preprogramming setting screen 1a with the videorecording preprogramming setting indication designating pointer 20a, and inputting setting information to the videorecording preprogramming setting section Asa. Specifically, the user operates a remote control or a direction button among the buttons on the apparatus in such a manner that a selection cursor is moved to the portion at which a videorecording preprogramming is desired, thus enabling setting input to be made in the videorecording preprogramming setting section Asa. Then, the user operates on a number button or the direction button or

the like to appropriately make an input into each area of the videorecording preprogramming setting section Asa.

The user inputs a year, month, and date of videorecording in the videorecording date setting area 12, selectively inputs
5 a channel for broadcasts such as terrestrial wave analog, BS, BS digital, CS digital, and terrestrial digital to the broadcasting channel setting area 13, inputs a start time for videorecording to the videorecording start time setting area 14, and inputs an end time for videorecording to the videorecording end time setting
10 area 15. In the present example, August 5th of the year 2002 is inputted as the date for videorecording, channel 2 is inputted as the broadcasting channel, 8:30 is inputted as the program start time, and 11:00 is inputted as the videorecording end time. After all inputs are correctly inputted, registration is executed by
15 moving the selection cursor onto the register button 19 and pressing an enter button or an execution button of the remote control or among the buttons on the apparatus.

Once registered, the setting information which has been inputted to the videorecording preprogramming setting section Asa
20 is reflected to the videorecording preprogramming operating area 7a. After the videorecording preprogramming setting is reflected to the videorecording preprogramming operating area 7a, the user can perform various operations by moving the videorecording preprogramming setting indication designating pointer 20a.
25 Specifically, as explicitly shown in FIG. 3, when the

videorecording preprogramming setting indication designating pointer 20a is moved to one of the videorecording preprogramming setting sections in the videorecording preprogramming operating area 7a, information set at that portion is presented in the form of a pop-up menu 30a.

With reference to FIG. 4, the pop-up menu 30a will be described. The pop-up menu 30a comprises a videorecording date setting area 31, a videorecording start time setting area 32, a videorecording end time setting area 33, a broadcasting channel setting area 34, a videorecording device area 35a, a videorecording medium area 36a, a videorecording mode setting area 37, an every-week setting button 38, a weekday setting button 39, an apply button 40, a return button 41, a delete button 42, a copy button 43, a display previous button 44, and a display next button 45.

The videorecording date setting area 31, the videorecording start time setting area 32, the videorecording end time setting area 33, the broadcasting channel setting area 34, and the videorecording mode setting area 37 have the same functions as those of the videorecording date setting area 12, the videorecording start time setting area 14, the videorecording end time setting area 15, the broadcasting channel setting area 13, and the videorecording mode setting area 16 of the videorecording preprogramming setting section 10a, respectively. Further, by operating the apply button 40, various setting changes can be reflected to the videorecording preprogramming operating area 7a.

Thus, the apply button 40 has the same function as that of the
aforementioned register button 19.

On the other hand, in the videorecording device area 35a
and the videorecording medium area 36a, a videorecording device
5 and a videorecording medium which are incorporated in the
information recording/reproduction apparatus Arp1 and usable in
a fixed manner are displayed. According to the present example,
a DVD recorder and a DVD-RAM are displayed as described above,
and the user cannot change these to anything else.

10 The user can set various settings for the same day of every
week by manipulating the every-week setting button 38.
Furthermore, the user can set various settings for each day of
the week, i.e., Monday to Friday, to be similarly performed for
every week by manipulating the weekday setting button 39. With
15 the return button 41, various setting changes can be returned to
the state prior to the changes. With the delete button 42, a
videorecording preprogramming setting can be deleted. With the
copy button 43, various settings can be copied to the videorecording
date setting area 31, the videorecording start time setting area
20 32, and the videorecording end time setting area 33. With the
display previous button 44, a videorecording preprogramming
setting which was set earlier in terms of setting order may be
switched to be displayed, when it is not being displayed due to
having an overlapping videorecording date setting and
25 videorecording start time setting. With the display next button

45, a videorecording preprogramming setting which was set later in terms of setting order can be switched to be displayed when it is not being displayed due to having an overlapping videorecording date setting and videorecording start time setting.

5 In short, the every-week setting button 38, the weekday setting button 39, the return button 41, the delete button 42, the copy button 43, the display previous button 44, and the display next button 45 have functions peculiar to the pop-up menu 30a.

10 Methods for changing a videorecording preprogramming setting by utilizing various functions included in the pop-up menu 30a will be specifically described. For example, if the user moves the videorecording preprogramming setting indication designating pointer 20a to the videorecording preprogramming setting portion which shows 8:30 to 11:00 of August 5th on a DVD recorder, the
15 pop-up menu 30a is displayed. By executing the apply button 40 after various settings are changed on the pop-up menu 30a, settings are reflected and the indication is shifted to the preprogramming setting area corresponding to the date and time, and the broadcasting channel which are in accordance with the setting
20 contents.

 In the case of changing any setting back before it is applied, the user can execute the return button 41 and the displayed contents within the pop-up menu 30a will return to its prior state. If the every-week setting button 38 is executed, a program from 8:30
25 to 11:00 on channel 2 is preprogrammed to a DVD recorder for every

Monday in the SP mode. If the weekday setting button 39 is executed, a program from 8:30 to 11:00 on channel 2 is preprogrammed to a DVD recorder for Monday through Friday at every week in the SP mode. In the every-week setting and weekday setting, the number
5 of weeks to be automatically preprogrammed may be fixed by the system or allowed to be set.

Further, in conjunction with an electronic program table, a search may be performed for a program title, genre, a performer, a keyword, or the like, and the result of the search may be
10 automatically used for a program videorecording preprogramming setting. When the delete button 42 is executed, a videorecording preprogramming is deleted and the indication disappears, so that the videorecording preprogramming setting indication designating pointer 20a moves to a next videorecording preprogramming setting
15 portion or to a previous videorecording preprogramming setting portion (videorecording preprogramming setting indication 8). Then, the pop-up menu 30a in accordance with the content of that portion is displayed. If no more videorecording preprogramming setting exists, it moves to the videorecording preprogramming state
20 table Tra.

In the case of copying a videorecording preprogramming setting, setting the date in the videorecording date setting area 31 to the 6th day and executing the copy button 42, for example, will allow the same preprogramming setting contents to be copied
25 to the 6th day. Similar operations will occur with respect to

other setting items as well. Conventional methods for a copying operation only allow an item by item copying just like when performing a new input. However, according to the present invention, the entire settings can be copied. Therefore, if a
5 setting content of interest is the same as or similar to the original to be copied, the setting input is easy to perform.

In the case of changing videorecording preprogramming settings, when the videorecording preprogramming setting indication designating pointer 20a is focused on, i.e., positioned
10 at a specific videorecording preprogramming setting portion (the videorecording preprogramming setting indication 8) of the videorecording preprogramming operating area 7a, changes may be made directly with a remote control and the like, or setting data candidates shown in a list box format and made to be selectable
15 may be displayed for a selective setting with an execution button or the like.

In the case where redundant preprogramming settings exist, the videorecording preprogramming setting indication designating pointer 20a may have its displayed color changed from the usual
20 preprogramming settings, flicker, or have its displayed form changed, in order to call the user's attention. Additionally, the contents of redundant setting may be confirmed using the display previous button 44 and the display next button 45. The videorecording preprogramming setting indication designating
25 pointer 20a may be displayed in an overlapping manner with slight

displacements, although this will make it very difficult to view, if a large number of redundant preprogrammings coincide.

The reason for causing the user to pay special attention to redundant preprogramming like this is because, as mentioned
5 earlier, the number of preprogrammed videorecordings which are actually executable differs from the number of videorecording preprogrammings which are acceptable and also fluctuates depending on the state of load. In other words, the user is informed of the possibility that those redundantly preprogrammed may not
10 actually be successfully videorecorded. In addition, the system can generate an even more specific alarm to the user based on the load associated with redundant preprogrammings. This also will be described later with reference to the flowcharts shown in FIG. 5 and FIG. 6.

15 In the case where no redundant preprogramming exists, the display previous button 44 and the display next button 45 do not need to be displayed. Other than redundant preprogramming, if, for example, preprogrammings coincide within a short time slot, a specially-changed display form may be indicated to permit
20 confirmation of each setting content. In the case where indications of redundant preprogramming and the like are coinciding, the number thereof may be displayed to further facilitate the user's recognition.

As for the operation of the videorecording preprogramming
25 setting indication designating pointer 20a at the time of focusing,

other than displaying the pop-up menu 30a, a portion in the
videorecording preprogramming operating area 7a on which the
videorecording preprogramming setting indication designating
pointer 20a is focused may have its displayed color changed from
5 the usual displayed color, flicker, or have its displayed form
changed. These operations during focusing can be made available
for the user to freely set.

By providing the horizontal scroll bar 9, a videorecording
preprogramming state in the date direction can be displayed in
10 more detail, and by providing the vertical bar 10, a videorecording
preprogramming state in the time direction can be displayed in
more detail. On the other hand, if it is desirable to roughly
view an outline of videorecording preprogramming settings, e.g.,
on a weekly or a monthly basis, a menu for altering the displaying
15 range may be provided so as to realize a function which enables
grasping the desired state at a glance.

Conventionally, it has been possible to perform
program-by-program preprogrammings based on an electronic program
table; however, time settings cannot be freely performed and
20 preprogramming on a plurality of devices has not been supported.
In the present invention, a button may be provided in the pop-up
menu 30a for shifting to an electronic program table, such that
execution of a preprogramming selection on the electronic program
table is reflected in the setting contents in the pop-up menu 30a,
25 and that information data such as a program title, stereo, etc.

in various electronic program tables can also be set and recorded.
An operational state of the videorecording device can be grasped
faster with schedule-like date-and-time basis preprogramming
settings rather than with a listing of programs provided by an
5 electronic program table.

A videorecording preprogramming execution state can be
easily grasped by changing the displayed color of, by flickering,
or by changing the display form of, the videorecording
preprogramming setting indication designating pointer 20a focused
10 on a videorecording preprogramming, depending on whether it has
been videorecorded, under videorecording, or not videorecorded
yet. Once a videorecording is completed, the corresponding
videorecording preprogramming setting in the videorecording
preprogramming operating area 7a may be deleted immediately or
15 after a predetermined time, or may be left to remain until deleted
by the user himself or herself. A videorecording which is completed
can be allowed to be reproduced as triggered by the videorecording
preprogramming setting indication designating pointer 20a, if the
medium is reproducible.

20 Next, with reference to the flowchart in FIG. 5, the
videorecording preprogramming operation of the aforementioned
information recording/reproduction apparatus Arp1 will be
described.

First, at step S2, the presence or absence of a preprogrammed
25 videorecording instruction from the user is detected.

Specifically, preprogramming data Ir outputted from the new recording setting information inputting unit 100 is obtained. Then, control proceeds to next step S4.

At step S4, the redundant setting detection unit 1000a
5 outputs the preprogramming state data requesting command Crs to the recording setting information storing unit 101a in response to the preprogramming data Ir. Then, the presence or absence of redundant settings is determined based on the registered
10 videorecording preprogramming information Irr returned from the recording setting information storing unit 101a. If any redundant settings are found, the videorecording preprogramming setting indication designating pointer 20a may have its displayed color changed from the usual preprogramming settings, flicker, or have its displayed form changed, as mentioned above. Then, control
15 proceeds to next step S6.

At step S6, a remaining recording capacity of a recording medium (a DVD-RAM) in the recording/reproduction unit 104 (a DVD recorder) is detected by the remaining capacity detection unit 1001a. Then, control proceeds to next step S8.

20 At step S8, it is determined whether the preprogrammed videorecording inputted at step S2 is executable or not, based on the result of redundant setting detection at the above-mentioned step S6. Specifically, whether the execution load of the preprogrammed videorecording redundantly received at present is
25 tolerable or not is determined. If it is determined as "Yes",

control proceeds to next step S10.

At step S10, it is determined whether the remaining capacity of the recording medium in the recording/reproduction unit 104 is sufficient or not for the preprogrammed videorecording inputted at step S2, based on the result of the remaining amount detection
5 obtained at the above-mentioned step S8. If it is determined as "Yes", control proceeds to next step S12.

At step S12, the recording setting information storing unit 101a records the preprogramming data Ir inputted via the redundant
10 setting detection unit 1000a into the videorecording preprogramming information database storing it. Consequently, the videorecording preprogramming designated by the preprogramming data Ir is registered to the information recording/reproduction apparatus videorecording preprogramming
15 setting screen 1a, and the registered videorecording preprogramming information Irr is updated. Then, control proceeds to next step S14.

At step S14, the recording setting information displaying unit 1002 displays a state of the registered preprogrammed
20 videorecording as the registered videorecording setting on the displaying unit 102, based on registered videorecording preprogramming information Irr updated at step S12. Then, control proceeds to next step S16.

At step S16, the information recording control unit 103a
25 notifies the registered preprogrammed videorecording to the AV

data control unit 1004 based on the registered videorecording preprogramming information Irr. Then, control proceeds to next step S18.

At step S18, the AV data control unit 1004 causes the
5 recording/reproduction unit 104 to record AV data Dav1 or AV data Dav2, when a designated time comes. Then, control returns to step S2.

If it is determined as "No" at the above-mentioned step S8, in other words, if it is determined that simultaneous
10 videorecording of all of the videorecording redundantly preprogrammed is impossible to perform, control proceeds to step S20.

If it is determined as "No", in other words, if the remaining amount determined as insufficient at the aforementioned step S10,
15 control proceeds to step S20.

At step S20, the user is asked as to whether settings of preprogrammed videorecording should be changed or not. Specifically, if it is determined as "No" at step S8, the user is asked as to whether to reduce the number of redundant
20 preprogramming or not due to there being a heavy load. On the other hand, if it is determined as "No" at step S10, it is asked as to whether to reduce the total time of preprogrammed videorecording received or not due to insufficient total recordable time. If the user changes the settings, in other words, if the
25 user corrects the inputted content using the new recording setting

information inputting unit 100 in response to these inquiries, it is determined as "Yes" and control returns to the aforementioned step S2. On the other hand, if the user does not change the settings, control proceeds to next step S22.

5 At step S22, videorecording preprogrammings are set as much as the remaining amount allows, to the limit of simultaneous videorecording ability for redundancies. Then, control proceeds to next step S24.

 At step S24, the displaying unit 102 indicates to the user
10 the setting of preprogrammed videorecording being impossible. Specifically, if "No" is determined at step S8, a message that simultaneous videorecording is impossible is displayed, and if "No" is determined at step S10, an alarming message that the remaining amount is insufficient is displayed. Then, control
15 proceeds to the above-described step S16.

 In accordance with the above constitution, it is intended to account for the user's intention as much as possible even in a state where preprogrammed videorecording is set to the information recording/reproduction apparatus Arp1 and an alarm
20 of invalid setting is being displayed due to the number of redundancies limitation for videorecording preprogramming and the remaining capacity limitation of a recording medium. The reason is that the user has newly set a videorecording preprogramming, a state may exist where the preprogramming is impossible to perform:
25 however, there is a possibility that such a state may be improved

as time passes. Specifically, the number of redundancies may be reduced due to completion in the execution of another videorecording which is already under execution or for which preprogramming has already been registered, or cancellation of
5 settings. Moreover, the remaining capacity may increase by a deletion of already-videorecorded data. At step S8 and S10, these improvements in videorecording conditions are detected and optimization of videorecording preprogramming settings is conducted.

10 With reference to the flowchart in FIG. 6, a videorecording preprogramming operation of the case in which the remaining capacity detection unit 1001a is omitted from the information recording/reproduction apparatus Arp1 will be described. The construction of the information recording/reproduction apparatus
15 Arp1 in this case is in the state where the remaining capacity detection unit 1001a and the registered videorecording preprogramming information Irr are removed from the block diagram shown in FIG. 1. As for the videorecording preprogramming operation in this case, step S6 and step S10 are removed from the
20 flowchart shown in FIG. 5, and step S22 and step S24 are replaced by S22r and S24r respectively.

As a result, at step S22r, videorecording preprogramming is set to the full extent of the simultaneous videorecording ability for redundancies. At step S24r, a message that simultaneous
25 videorecording is impossible is displayed the displaying unit 102.

In FIG. 7, items which can be inputted through the new recording setting information inputting unit 100 and its inputting means are schematically shown. The new recording setting information inputting unit 100 comprises the videorecording date setting area 12, the broadcasting channel setting area 13, the videorecording start time setting area 14, the videorecording end time setting area 15, the videorecording mode setting area 16, all of which are shown in the videorecording preprogramming setting section Asa, and setting optimization means constituted by step S8 to S24. The videorecording medium setting area 17 is utilized in a second embodiment described later.

Next, with reference to the flowchart shown in FIG. 8, the videorecording preprogramming changing process operation will be described. First, at step S202, the videorecording preprogramming setting screen 1a is displayed. Then, the user is prompted to make an input for a videorecording preprogramming setting.

At step S204, the pop-up menu 30a is displayed when the user causes the videorecording preprogramming setting indication designating pointer 20a to be focused on a portion of the videorecording preprogramming operating area 7a which has already been preprogrammed for videorecording. The user manipulates the horizontal scroll bar 9 and the vertical scroll bar 10 as necessary, to focus on the desired videorecording-preprogrammed portion with the videorecording preprogramming setting indication designating

pointer 20a. Then, an input to each area of the pop-up menu 30a is prompted to the user.

At step S206, the presence or absence of the apply button 40 manipulation detection after the input to each area of the pop-up menu 30a is determined. At the time when the manipulation of the apply button 40 is detected, control proceeds to next step S208.

At step S208, the videorecording preprogramming setting information which has been set and inputted to the pop-up menu 30a is reflected on the videorecording preprogramming operating area 7a.

At step S210, the videorecording preprogramming setting indication 8 is displayed on the videorecording preprogramming operating area 7a based on the videorecording preprogramming setting information which has been reflected at step S208. If it is redundantly preprogrammed, the form of the videorecording preprogramming operating area 7a is respectively changed and displayed. Then, then, this subroutine is completed.

In FIG. 9, a constitution for realizing the recording setting information displaying unit 1002 is schematically shown. The recording setting information displaying unit 1002 can be constituted from the various means shown in this figure.

As mentioned above, the information recording/reproduction apparatus according to the first embodiment has features described hereafter.

By providing a new videorecording preprogramming setting area, there is provided a desirable effect in that a new videorecording preprogramming is registered more clearly and accurately than a new videorecording preprogramming area designation using a remote control and a mouse on coordinates at a preprogramming table.

By enabling every-week setting and a weekday setting, a program videorecording preprogramming operation which has regularity is made easy.

By a search setting which can be conducted in conjunction with an electronic program table, there is provided a desirable effect in that the videorecording of a desired program can be easily set and a program desired for videorecording preprogramming can be set without being overlooked.

In conventional methods, copying operation can only be performed exactly like performing a new input. With a copy button, there is provided a desirable effect in that the cumbersome program videorecording preprogramming setting which are the same or similar in setting contents can be easily and comfortably set.

In the event redundant preprogramming settings have been made, the videorecording preprogramming setting indication may have its displayed color changed from the usual preprogramming settings, flicker, or have its displayed form changed to call attention; and through confirming the contents of redundant setting by a display previous button and a display next button, there is

provided a desirable effect in that a difficulty in viewing which may occur if a large number of redundant preprogrammings coincide when using a conceivable method of displaying videorecording preprogramming setting indications in an overlapping manner with slight displacements, can be prevented.

There is provided a desirable effect in that when indications of redundant preprogrammings and the like are overlapping, the number of them may be displayed to facilitate recognition.

As for the operation of a cursor at the time of focusing, focusing may be indicated simply by changing the displayed color from the usual one, flickering, or changing the displayed form, and a pop-up display may be presented with a menu button or the like, or a pop-up display may be presented automatically at the time of focusing. By allowing these operations to be modified in accordance with the user's settings, there is provided a desirable effect in that an automatic pop-up display may be selected according to the user's preference and thus enabling a comfortable manipulation which suits to individual preferences such as how busy or kind the automatic display should be.

There is provided a desirable effect in that, by providing a horizontal bar, a more detailed display in the date direction can be presented, and by providing a vertical bar, a more detailed display in the time direction can be presented; on the other hand, by providing a menu for altering the displaying range, if it is desirable to roughly view an outline of videorecording

preprogramming settings, e.g., on a weekly or a monthly basis,
a function which enables grasping the desired state at a glance
can be provided.

By providing a button in a pop-up display menu for shifting
5 to an electronic program table such that execution of a
preprogramming selection on the electronic program table is
reflected in the setting contents in the pop-up display, and that
information data such as a program title, stereo, etc., in various
electronic program tables can also be set and recorded, there is
10 provided a desirable effect in that inputs of various
videorecording data can be made easy.

By changing the displayed color of, flickering, or changing
the displayed form of, a videorecording preprogramming setting
indication, depending on whether the program videorecording
15 preprogramming has been executed, under execution, or not executed
yet, there is provided a desirable effect in that the videorecording
preprogramming execution state can be easily grasped.

There is provided a desirable effect in that, by deleting
any videorecording preprogramming setting indication immediately
20 after the completion of execution in program videorecording
preprogramming, a programming table can be made easy to view, and
by deleting preprogramming setting data as well, memory in the
device can be saved.

By deleting after a predetermined time those program
25 videorecording preprogrammings whose execution have been

completed, there is provided a desirable effect in that the latest program videorecording preprogramming information can be confirmed and memory in the device can also be saved thereby.

By deleting after user confirmation those program
5 videorecordings preprogrammings whose execution have been completed, there is provided a desirable effect in that a memo function of details of instances of user execution can also be realized and memory in the device can be saved thereby, too.

Further, there is provided a desirable effect in that, by
10 virtually being used as a plurality of recording devices through a multi-task process, the information recording/reproduction apparatus can have its resource put to the best possible use without waste, even though physically being a single recording device. In addition, in the case where preprogrammed videorecordings are
15 set up to resource limitations, preprogrammings can be accepted up to a maximum possible amount of redundancies and videorecording time at that point of time, and when the resource condition is improved, preprogrammings can again be accepted up to a greater amount of redundancies and videorecording time. In other words,
20 there is provided a desirable effect in that a user's requests can be satisfied as much as possible by dynamically responding to changes in resource.

(second embodiment)

With reference to FIG. 10 to FIG. 19, an information
25 recording/reproduction apparatus according to a second embodiment

will be described. The information recording/reproduction apparatus according to the present embodiment comprises one or more recoding devices and is interconnected to other videorecording apparatuses via a network or wiring. As an example of such, a television set connected to a plurality of recorders through a LAN may be given.

In FIG. 10, the constitution of the information recording/reproduction apparatus according to an embodiment of the present invention is shown. In an information recording/reproduction apparatus Arp2, a recording setting information storing unit 101b, an information recording control unit 103b, a redundant setting detection unit 1000b, and a remaining capacity detection unit 1001b respectively replace the recording setting information storing unit 101a, information recording control unit 103a, redundant setting detection unit 1000a, and the remaining capacity detection unit 1001a in the information recording/reproduction apparatus Arp1 shown in FIG. 1. Furthermore, a NW device recording setting information sending/receiving unit 2000, a NW device setting information storing unit 2001, a NW device remaining capacity detection unit 2002, a NW device recording/reproduction control unit 2003, and a NW device recording/reproduction control signal sending/receiving unit 2004 are newly provided.

The NW device recording setting information sending/receiving unit 2000 exchanges preprogrammed

videorecording setting information Irn with an external recording device connected via a network and the like.

The NW device setting information storing unit 2001 is a database which, via the NW device recording setting information sending/receiving unit 2000, receives external videorecording preprogramming information Irn set to the external recording device and records it. In response to the external preprogramming state data requesting command Crn outputted by the redundant setting detection unit 1000b, the NW device setting information storing unit 2001 outputs the external videorecording preprogramming information Irn to the redundant setting detection unit 1000b.

The NW device remaining capacity detection unit 2002 receives external remaining capacity information Irvn indicative of an available storing capacity of the recording medium in the external recording device via the NW device recording setting information sending/receiving unit 2000, and stores the external remaining capacity information Irvn.

The NW device recording/reproduction control unit 2003 generates a recording/reproduction instruction output Crpo instructing the external recording device to record and reproduce. Then, the recording/reproduction instruction output Crpo is outputted to the external recording device via the NW device recording/reproduction control signal sending/receiving unit 2004. The NW device recording/reproduction control unit 2003 further receives a recording/reproduction instructing input Crpi

which is an instruction from the external recording device directed to the information recording/reproduction apparatus Arp2.

In addition to the functions of the recording setting information storing unit 101a, the recording setting information
5 storing unit 101b has a function of outputting an update notification Nr1, which, when the videorecording preprogramming information database is updated, notifies the details thereof to the NW device recording setting information sending/receiving unit 2000.

10 In addition to the functions of the redundant setting detection unit 1000a, the redundant setting detection unit 1000b has a function of outputting the external preprogramming state data requesting command Crn, which requests the NW device setting information storing unit 2001 for videorecording preprogramming
15 information directed to the recording device connected via a network. Further, the redundant setting detection unit 1000b determines the presence or absence of redundant settings, based on the preprogramming data Ir and the external videorecording preprogramming information Irn.

20 In addition to the functions of the remaining capacity detection unit 1001a, the remaining capacity detection unit 1001b has a function of outputting to the NW device recording setting information sending/receiving unit 2000, a capacity changing notification Nr2, which, when the remaining capacity of the
25 recording/reproduction unit 104 changes, notifies the details

thereof.

When receiving the update notification Nr1 from the remaining capacity detection unit 1001b, the NW device recording setting information sending/receiving unit 2000 updates the database of the NW device remaining capacity detection unit 2002. Further, when receiving the capacity changing notification Nr2 from the new recording setting information inputting unit 100b, the NW device recording setting information sending/receiving unit 2000 updates the database of the NW device remaining capacity detection unit 2002.

The information recording/reproduction apparatus Arp2 is preferably constituted by a plurality of videorecording/reproduction devices interconnected via a network. A network adaptor for connecting to the external Internet is also connected to the information recording/reproduction apparatus Arp2. The communication network may utilize connection via Ethernet, optical fibers, a wireless or coaxial cable LAN or the like, an IEEE1394 interface device, or a modem.

As means for connecting to an external via a network adaptor, telephone lines, ADSL, other DSLs, FTTH (optical fibers), CATV, wireless telephones such as mobile telephones or PHS, or power lines may be used.

With reference to FIG. 11 and FIG. 12, a videorecording preprogramming setting in the information recording/reproduction apparatus Arp2 will be described. In FIG. 11, a videorecording

preprogramming setting screen 1b to be displayed on the displaying unit 102 is schematically shown. In the videorecording preprogramming setting screen 1b, a videorecording preprogramming state table Trb, a videorecording preprogramming operating area 7b, and a videorecording preprogramming setting section Asb replace the videorecording preprogramming state table Tra, videorecording preprogramming operating area 7a, and the videorecording preprogramming setting section Asa in the videorecording preprogramming setting screen 1a shown in FIG. 2, respectively.

Further, a videorecording device displaying section 4 (denoted as "device" in the figure) and a medium displaying section 5 (denoted as "drive" in the figure) are added.

In the videorecording device displaying section 4, an external videorecording device which is connected to the information recording/reproduction apparatus Arp2 directly or via a network and which may be used for videorecording preprogramming is displayed. In the present example, it is shown that a videorecording preprogramming can be made on three videorecording devices, i.e., BD1, DVD1, and EXT.

In the medium displaying section 5, a medium of each videorecording device which is shown in the videorecording device displaying section 4 and to which information will actually be recorded is displayed. In the present example, a videorecording device BD1 includes a BD (Blue Ray Disc) and a HDD (Hard Disc Drive); DVD1 includes a DVD and a HDD; and EXT includes recording devices

S1 and S2 which are to be connected via the Internet.

The videorecording preprogramming operating area 7b is basically the same as the aforementioned videorecording preprogramming operating area 7a. However, one recording device
5 incorporated in the information recording/reproduction apparatus Arp1 is the target in the videorecording preprogramming operating area 7b, whereas in the videorecording preprogramming operating area 7b, not only a recording device incorporated in the information recording/reproduction apparatus Arp2 but also a plurality of
10 recording devices interconnected via a network or wiring are the targets.

By designating a specific portion on the videorecording preprogramming operating area 7a, the videorecording preprogramming setting indication designating pointer 20b causes
15 setting contents corresponding to that portion to be displayed on the videorecording preprogramming setting section Asb. In the present example, a videorecording preprogramming is set to 8:30 to 11:00 on the 5th (Monday) on a recording medium DVD of the videorecording device DVD recorder (DVD1) and the portion is
20 designated. In addition to the aforementioned setting information, more detailed information is displayed in the videorecording preprogramming setting section Asb. Such detailed information will be described later with reference to FIG. 12.

A videorecording medium setting area 17 and a videorecording
25 device setting area 18 are newly provided in the videorecording

preprogramming setting section Asb, as compared to the
videorecording preprogramming setting section Asa. In the
videorecording medium setting area 17 is used for selecting a
desired drive specifically shown in the medium displaying section
5. In the videorecording device setting area 18 is used for
selecting a desired device shown in the videorecording device
displaying section 4. According to the present example, DVD1 is
selected as a device and DVD is also selected as a recording medium
at the medium displaying section 5.

10 In FIG. 12, with the information recording/reproduction
apparatus Arp2, a pop-up menu 30b which is displayed when a
videorecording preprogramming portion desired in the
videorecording preprogramming state table Trb is designated with
the videorecording preprogramming setting indication designating
15 pointer 20b, is presented.

To the videorecording device setting area 18 of the
videorecording preprogramming setting section Asb, a device on
which to videorecord a program is set and inputted. In the present
example, a DVD recorder (DVD1), which is a DVD recording unit,
20 is selected. In the videorecording medium setting area 17, a
videorecording medium which can be used by a videorecording device
integrated into the device set at the videorecording device setting
area 18 is selected. In the present example, a DVD-RAM is selected.

With reference to FIG. 13, the pop-up menu 30b will be
25 described. In the pop-up menu 30b, as compared to the pop-up

menu 30a shown in FIG. 4, the videorecording device area 35a and the videorecording medium setting area 36a are replaced with a videorecording device setting area 35b and a videorecording medium setting area 36b, respectively. This corresponds to the fact that a videorecording device and a videorecording medium, which are not capable of being selected in the information recording/reproduction apparatus videorecording preprogramming setting screen 1a, are capable of being selected in the present embodiment.

Methods for changing a videorecording preprogramming setting by utilizing various functions included in the pop-up menu 30b will be specifically described. For example, when a user moves the videorecording preprogramming setting indication designating pointer 20b to the videorecording preprogramming setting portion from 8:30 to 11:00 of August 5th on the DVD recorder of DVD1, the pop-up menu 30b is displayed. After various settings are changed on the pop-up menu 30b, by executing the apply button 40, the settings are reflected and the indication is shifted to the preprogramming setting area corresponding to the date and time, the device, and the preprogramming setting area of the medium which are in accordance with the setting contents.

In the case of changing any setting back before it is applied, the user can execute the return button 41 and the displayed contents within the pop-up menu 30b will return to its prior state. If the every-week setting button 38 is executed, a program from 8:30

to 11:00 on channel 2 is preprogrammed on the DVD recorder of DVD1 for every Monday in the SP mode. If the weekday setting button 39 is executed, a program from 8:30 to 11:00 on channel 2 is preprogrammed to the DVD recorder of DVD1 for Monday through Friday at every week in the SP mode. In the every-week setting and weekday setting, the number of weeks to be automatically preprogrammed may be fixed by the system or allowed to be set.

The operation of aforementioned changes in videorecording preprogramming will be described in detail below. When an extension in the broadcasting of a preprogrammed program occurs, for example, in FIG. 11, when the preprogramming for 12:00 to 14:30 on the 5th on the HDD of DVD1 is extended to 15:00, the previously preprogrammed preprogramming for 14:00 to 14:30 may be changed to the unpreprogrammed BD or HDD of BD1 or S1 of EXT in the videorecording preprogramming setting. If there are a plurality of setting-changeable candidates of videorecording devices as in the case above, their order of priority may be determined by the system of the information recording device as a standard rule or allowed to be set by the user. For example, if the devices to be changed are a plurality of videorecording devices, their order of priority is set as follows in a descending order: a different videorecording device within the same device; the same kind of videorecording device in a device connected to a network; and a smallest network address

In FIG. 19, an exemplary order of priority in selecting

recording devices in the information recording/reproduction apparatus shown in FIG. 10 is presented. In the present example, on the condition that each recording device is not in use or being selected, they are selected as in the following order: first, the
5 HDD of BD; then, the HDD of DVD1; then, the S1 of EXT; the BD of BD1; the S2 of EXT; then, the DVD of DVD1.

As shown in FIG. 19, the user may directly set an order from a list of network-connected devices and videorecording devices thereof. Even if the aforementioned changes or extensions are
10 man-made, i.e., made by a user manipulation of executing the apply button 40 on the pop-up menu 30b, a similar operation is performed.

Similarly, if, at minimum, a videorecording date, a start time, an end time, and a channel are inputted to the videorecording preprogramming setting section Asb and the register button 19 is
15 executed, a videorecording preprogramming is set in accordance with the aforementioned order of priority. The order of priority may be the same as that described above or another rule may be used, depending on the case. In the case of a minimum information input, a device and a medium are automatically set according to
20 the above-described rule. Further, a videorecording device and a device, additionally designated, will be automatically set, as conditions are added to the rule.

A device and a videorecording device are designated for the date and time inputted and registration is executed. Further,
25 a case is considered where a setting which has been changed on

the pop-up menu 30b coincides on a device or a videorecording device that has already been set. For example, a case in FIG. 11 where a preprogramming for 9:00 to 10:00 on the 5th on the DVD of DVD1 in the videorecording preprogramming setting section Asb is registered and executed is considered. In this case, the DVD of DVD1 is already preprogrammed for 8:30 to 11:00; if this preprogramming is not a preprogramming designating a videorecording device, this preprogramming is changed to the HDD of DVD1 and the above-described registered and executed preprogramming is set.

Therefore, it follows that the attribute of the item at the time of videorecording preprogramming setting should carry information as to whether an explicit designation from the user has been made or not. Furthermore, if the preprogramming for 12:00 to 14:30 on the 5th on the HDD of DVD1 is changed to BD on the pop-up menu 30b, because the S1 and the S2 of EXT are preprogrammed, the setting is changed to the BD of BD1. As described above, because the device and the system automatically search for and set an empty slot, videorecording preprogramming settings can be easily performed. In the case where there is a coincidence, too, because the device and the system automatically perform re-setting according to a predetermined order of priority, videorecording preprogramming settings can be easily performed without requiring the user to check the videorecording preprogramming state in every one of a plurality of devices to determine the optimum for re-setting

In a hybrid device where a plurality of videorecording devices such as a HDD and a DVD recorder are comprised in each device, by allowing a plurality of videorecording devices to operate simultaneously, it becomes possible to make a plurality of redundant videorecording preprogrammings. Even if a plurality of redundant videorecording preprogrammings consequently occur, such a videorecording preprogramming state is displayed in a manner very easy to understand, according to the present invention.

Further, those which are under execution can be simultaneously reproduced during videorecording. In addition, a button may be provided in a pop-up display to indicate a content of videorecording, a date and time of videorecording, a videorecording time, a data capacity, a videorecording mode, videorecording picture/sound information, and the like, as a detailed display.

As mentioned above, the information recording/reproduction apparatuses Arp2 according to the present embodiment may be connected together via a network and function to perform recording information in the place of each other. In such a case, a master device and slave device relationship emerges, where one manages preprogramming of the other. The information recording/reproduction apparatus Arp2 shown in FIG. 10 is illustrated as having a structure for functioning as a master device. To function as a slave device, there are functions unnecessary for functioning as a master device, and so the constitution can

be made simpler.

In FIG. 14, the construction of the information recording/reproduction apparatus Arp2 as a slave device is shown. For distinction from the information recording/reproduction apparatus Arp2 as a master device, the slave device is referred to as an information recording/reproduction apparatus Arp2S. From the information recording/reproduction apparatus Arp2S, the NW device setting information storing unit 2001 and the NW device remaining capacity detection unit 2002 in the information recording/reproduction apparatus Arp2 are removed. This is because, the information recording/reproduction apparatus Arp2S as a slave device does not need to possess external videorecording preprogramming information Irn and external remaining capacity information Irvn which are related to other information recording/reproduction apparatus Arp2.

Next, with reference to the flowchart in FIG. 15, a preprogrammed videorecording operation of the information recording/reproduction apparatus Arp2S will be described. For conciseness of description, a case where the remaining capacity detection unit 1001b and the NW device remaining capacity detection unit 2002 are removed from the information recording/reproduction apparatus Arp2S is taken as an example and will be described. In this sense, in the flowchart shown in FIG. 15, steps S2, S4, S8, S12, S14, S16, S18, S20, S22r, and S24r in the flowchart shown in FIG. 6, which are directed to the recording/reproduction unit

104 of the information recording/reproduction apparatus Arp1
itself, are respectively replaced with S2b, S4b, S8b, S12b, S14b,
S16b, S18b, S20b, S22rb, and S24rb, which are directed also to
the recording/reproduction unit 104 of the other information
5 recording/reproduction apparatus Arp2. In other words, in the
present embodiment, two setting conditions related to the
information recording/reproduction apparatus Arp2 such as the
preprogramming data Ir and the external videorecording
preprogramming information Irn are the processing targets.

10 Step S15 is added between step S14b and step S16b. At this
step, the registered videorecording preprogramming information
Irr is notified to the other preprogrammed recording device
connected to the information recording/reproduction apparatus
Arp1. Through this, two or more preprogramming recording devices
15 interconnected to each other can perform preprogrammed
videorecording in the place of each other.

With reference to the flowchart shown in FIG. 16, a
preprogrammed videorecording operation of the information
recording/reproduction apparatus Arp2 as a master device will be
20 described. In this flowchart, step S15 and step S16b shown in
the flowchart in FIG. 15 are replaced by step S15m. At step S15m,
a preprogrammed videorecording which is set in the registered
videorecording preprogramming information Irr is sequentially
executed on the information recording/reproduction apparatus Arp2
25 itself; in addition, the recording/reproduction instruction

output Crpo is transmitted to an external recording device (the information recording/reproduction apparatus Arp2S as a slave device), as a preprogrammed videorecording executing command. By this, the information recording/reproduction apparatus Arp2 as
5 master performs preprogrammed recording of information through the use of the recording ability of itself as well as the ability of an external recording device (the information recording/reproduction apparatus Arp2S as slave).

In FIG. 17, the construction of the case where the
10 information recording/reproduction apparatus Arp2 is connected to other recording devices via the Internet is displayed. This information recording/reproduction apparatus Arp2n is based on the information recording/reproduction apparatus Arp2 shown in FIG. 10, with the NW device recording setting information
15 sending/receiving unit 2000, the NW device recording/reproduction control signal sending/receiving unit 2004, and the NW device AV receiving unit 1005 being connected to a public circuit network NW. Through this public circuit network NW, the external remaining
20 capacity information Irvn, the external videorecording preprogramming information Irn of an external recording device, the recording/reproduction instructing input Crpi, the recording/reproduction instruction output Crpo, and AV data Dav are exchanged in order to perform preprogrammed recordings in the place of each other.

25 In FIG. 18, an example of the specific construction of the

information recording/reproduction apparatus Arp2 in which a plurality of recording devices are interconnected via a network as mentioned above is schematically shown. The information recording/reproduction apparatus Arp2 is preferably constructed from a plurality of videorecording/reproduction devices which are connected to a television device 25 via a network. The television device 25 (denoted as "TV" in FIG. 18) is connected to two Blu-ray disk recorders 21 and 23 (denoted as "BD1" and "BD2" in FIG. 18) via a communication network 27. Further, a DVD recorder 22 (denoted as "DVD1" in FIG. 18) and a personal computer 24 are similarly connected to the television device 25.

In this case, preferably, the constitution is arranged so that the personal computer 24 functions as a master device and other devices function as slave devices.

Further, a network adaptor 26 for connection to the external Internet is also connected to the television device 25. The communication network 27 may utilize connection via Ethernet, optical fibers, a wireless and coaxial cable LAN or the like, an IEEE1394 interface device, or a modem. In addition, external connection for the network adaptor 26 may be telephone lines, ADSL, other DSLs, FTTH (optical fibers), CATV, wireless telephones such as mobile telephones or PHS, or power lines.

For the information recording/reproduction apparatus Arp2 and a videorecording device, devices capable of videorecording such as a DVD recorder, a Blu-ray disk recorder, a hard disk recorder,

a videotape recorder, a personal computer, and the like may be used. As a videorecording medium, any recording medium may be used, e.g., optical disks such as a DVD-RAM, a DVD-R, a DVD-RW, a DVD+R, a DVD+RW, a Blu-ray Disc, a Video-CD; a hard disk; any
5 type of memory card such as a SD card; and videotapes such as D-VHS, S-VHS and DV.

As aforementioned, the information recording/reproduction apparatus according to the second embodiment has following features in addition to the features of the information
10 recording/reproduction apparatus according to the first embodiment.

With each device, there is provided a desirable effect in that: through a simultaneous operation of videorecording devices in a hybrid device comprising a plurality of videorecording devices,
15 a plurality of redundant preprogrammings can be made; and even with a device comprising only one videorecording device, through realizing a plurality of data recordings by a parallel processing operation based on an effective data writing algorithm by which, for example, an optical disk pick up capable of RAM operation and
20 a magnetic head of a hard disk operates quickly, and through enhancing the performance of the videorecording device thereby, a plurality of redundant preprogrammings can be made.

Additionally, with such a device comprising a plurality of videorecording devices, a conventional table format by
25 videorecording preprogramming methods is quite difficult to view;

conventional videorecording preprogramming methods using an electronic program table allow a preprogramming on a program-by-program basis but do not allow free time settings or preprogramming for a plurality of devices. With preprogramming
5 settings of a date-and-time basis schedule, there is provided a desirable effect in that an operational state of a device can be grasped faster, rather than with a listing of programs provided by an electronic program table.

By displaying each videorecording device among a plurality
10 of videorecording devices and the number of simultaneously recordable instances on videorecording devices which are capable of performing a plurality of simultaneous recordings are possible within each preprogramming table, and by enabling setting thereof, there is provided a desirable effect in that: a videorecording
15 preprogramming state may be easily grasped at a glance; plural program simultaneous videorecording functions possessed by the device may be used to its full potential; and useless redundant program videorecording preprogrammings are eliminated.

By displaying within a preprogramming table, a plurality
20 of videorecording devices interconnected to a network, there is provided a desirable effect in that: a program videorecording preprogramming state may be easily grasped at a glance; and through putting videorecording preprogramming settings and videorecording preprogramming settings of a plurality of
25 videorecording devices under a collective management by

interconnecting a plurality of devices, an effective
videorecording preprogramming setting without leaks or redundancy
can be performed, even in the case where it is desirable to make
a plurality of videorecording preprogramming settings in the same
5 time slot due to there being more and more channels, including
analog broadcasts, as digital broadcasts gain more prevalence.

Further, aforementioned settings may be performed from one
device or from a personal computer connected to a network.
Alternatively, they may be performed through accessing the network
10 from outside via the Internet or the like using an external personal
computer, a portable information terminal, a cellular phone, or
a wired telephone. As a result, there is provided a desirable
effect in that even when a forgotten program videorecording
preprogramming is noticed outside or a new program to videorecord
15 occurs, a program videorecording preprogramming setting is
possible.

There is provided a desirable effect in that, by setting
program setting information for a desired preprogramming, a
videorecording preprogramming setting can be automatically
20 performed to the optimum videorecording device given the
videorecording setting state of a videorecording device connected
to a network; and a program videorecording preprogramming setting
is easily performed without thinking in detail.

By automatic program videorecording preprogramming
25 re-setting, in the case where an additional program setting

information is difficult to realize under the present setting state of each device, there is provided a desirable effect in that a videorecording preprogramming setting may be reconstructed in such a manner that a processing load which arises from a combination
5 of a program and a videorecording device selection and hardware resource distribution based on the remaining capacity and the like are optimized.

By an automatic program videorecording preprogramming setting, there is provided a desirable effect in that, if, at minimum,
10 a videorecording date setting, a videorecording start time setting, a videorecording end time setting, and a broadcasting channel setting are set at a new videorecording preprogramming setting, the device and the system automatically perform the optimum videorecording preprogramming.

15 By an automatic alarm notice, in the case where a medium is not inserted to a tray when a time to execute a videorecording preprogramming for a removable medium approaches or the remaining amount of the medium or similarly that of a hard disk videorecording device is not enough, there is provided a desirable effect in that
20 an alarm may be displayed or an alarm mail may be sent to other network connected devices or a personal computer or to an external cellular phone or a personal computer so as not to fail in an important program videorecording preprogramming.

In addition to the aforementioned, through automatic
25 diversion at the time of error, there is provided a desirable effect

in that a program videorecording preprogramming setting is automatically changed to another videorecording device medium or to a medium of another device.

There is provided a desirable effect in that: if the medium
5 is capable of being reproduced, those whose execution has been completed can be selected and executed from a videorecording preprogramming setting indication; those which are under execution can be simultaneously reproduced during videorecording; and a reproduction, a deletion, and a dubbing while designating a device
10 and a videorecording device on a pop-up menu, are also possible.

INDUSTRIAL APPLICABILITY

The present invention may be used for preprogrammed
15 videorecordings and the like which, among a plurality of recording devices connected via a network, make an effective use of unused resource in each other through performing a preprogrammed videorecording in the place of each other.